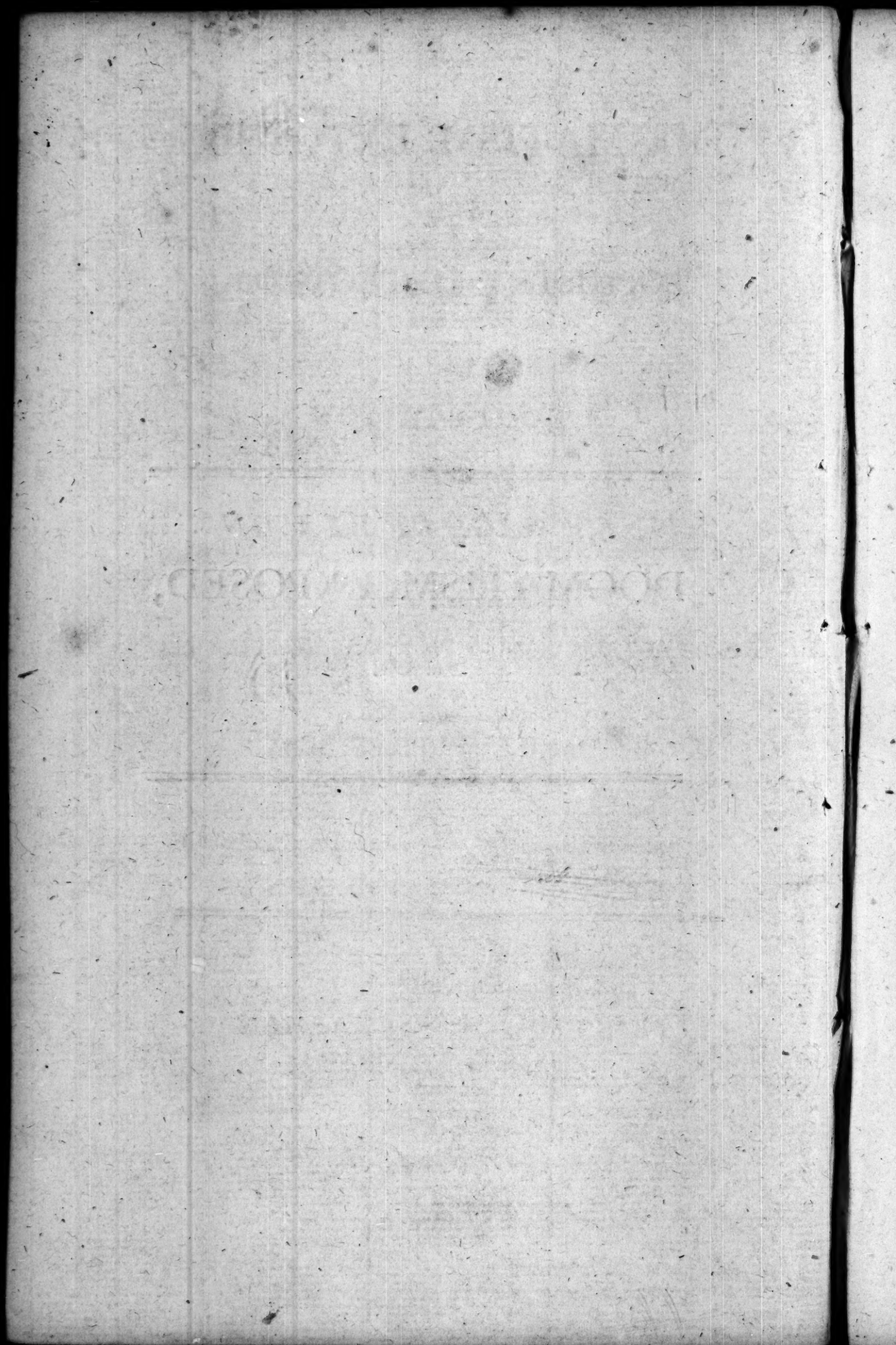

DOGMATISM EXPOSED,

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DOGMATISM EXPOSED,

AND

SOPHISTRY DETECTED:

OR,

A CONFUTATION

OF

PAINE'S "AGE OF REASON."

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE REPLIES ALREADY PUBLISHED.

BY DANIEL M'NEILLE, A. M.

Ο υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐλθὼν ἀρεῶν εὐρήσει τὴν πόλιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Luc. xviii. 8.

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TO THE
FELLOWS, SCHOLARS, AND STUDENTS
OF
TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE always regarded it as an inestimable advantage, that I had an opportunity of attending the Lectures of the late most able Professors of Divinity, Doctors Forsyth, Dabzac, and Usher; the last-mentioned of whom adjudged to me the first premium for Divinity, given in the class to which I belonged. I beg leave to present to you the following Treatise; I have only to regret that it is not more worthy to meet the eye of your learned body, and that of the Public. If I have been able to combat the errors of Deists and Sectaries with any success, I ascribe the merit, under Providence, to the excellent system of education established in the University of Dublin, which, I trust, will ever prove a strong bulwark of the sound doctrine established in our Religion, as founded on Scripture.

With the utmost respect and esteem,

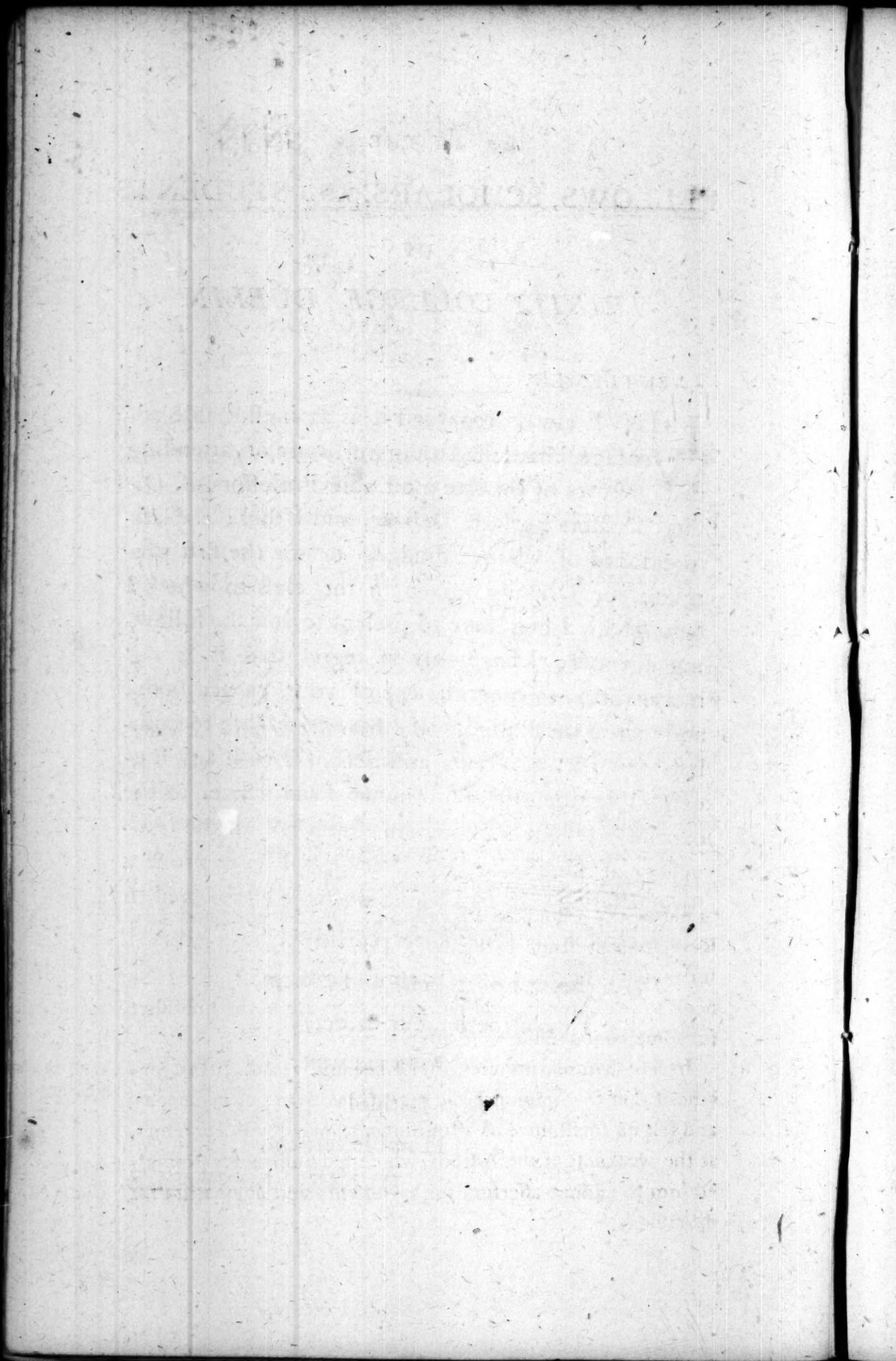
I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

Your faithful

Humble servant,

DANIEL M'NEILLE.



P R E F A C E.

WHEN I first heard that Mr. Paine had written a Treatise on RELIGION, I did not find that my curiosity was at all excited. From some former productions of his pen I apprehended that he did not possess information sufficient to qualify him for the momentous investigation; I therefore omitted to procure the book, until I heard it much talked of, and, by some, extolled in the highest strains of panegyric, as an unanswerable argument for infidelity. I still doubted the truth of this representation, because I was of opinion that very little could be added to what had already been written on the subject, particularly by a man who was ignorant of *all* the ancient languages; and who had, in a former publication, acquainted the world, that when he was only sixteen years old he ran away from his friends, and entered on board a ship. Still, however, Mr. Paine was quoted to me as the redoubted champion of Deism, who had laid Revelation prostrate in the dust. I then determined to judge for myself; and, as a great favour, a gentleman lent me the book to read, for I could not get a copy from the publisher for some considerable time after.

In less than ten minutes after I began to read, I was convinced that the opinion I had entertained was not erroneous, and felt no small share of astonishment, mixed with contempt, at the weakness of the Author, whose self-sufficiency prompted him to adduce assertion for argument, and dogmatism for discussion.

As

As I read, I made notes of what appeared absurd, but, in a short time, they multiplied so fast, that I found, if I persevered, I should be obliged to transcribe a large proportion of the book, and that it would exceed the limits of a few sheets of paper, which was all I originally intended to fill. I then made a determination to reply at large, but without the intention of publishing, if any answer should appear in the mean time to anticipate me. Three Replies have since appeared, but, to my mind, they are truly objectionable in some essential points.

Since I became acquainted with deistical writings I have always been of opinion, that one effectual mode of answering them is to oppose to them the positive evidence for Revelation (exclusive of answering the several objections urged); for that once having been shown to be conclusive, the objections of cavillers vanish. In the Treatise which follows this Preface I have taken the opportunity, from Mr. Paine having said, that the Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan religions were equally false, to show the fallacy of his arguments, and have given a short view of the evidence for Christianity, which, I am of opinion, is sufficient to satisfy any unprejudiced mind, which will give that attention to the momentous subject its importance claims from every soul of man.

How far I have succeeded in briefly stating this evidence, it is not for me to affirm; but if I have failed, the blame is not to be imputed to the subject, but to the writer. It need scarcely be mentioned that volumes have been written on the subject, and that consequently I cannot be so vain and absurd as to profess to the world, that a small pamphlet can possibly contain a full and perfect discussion; but, I trust, I have demonstrated, that Mr. Paine is entirely unqualified to write on the subject, and that he has totally failed in his attack on religion. Exclusive of the objection to the three Replies which have already appeared to *Age of Reason*, that

none of them contains a summary of the positive evidence for Christianity, there are other defects visible. The first answer which appeared comes from a gentleman *hackneyed* in the tenets of Priestley, and contains sentiments as derogatory to Christianity, and as abhorrent from Scripture, as any thing Paine or any other Deist has written. This is a serious charge, but I undertake to prove it.

As this gentleman has written in defence of Christianity, I have only to oppose its authority to his unfounded dogmas. He says, "That creed of Christian churches which acknowledges Jesus Christ to be God, and the Holy Ghost to be God, is a fundamental violation of all theology." But true theology has revealed this very doctrine. Suffice it briefly to mention, that Christ asserts his divinity, in that controversy with the Jews, John, viii. 56. where he tells them, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM." Upon the authority of this text I take my stand, and defy all the Socinians in the universe to deny, that it utterly demolishes their blasphemous system.

The same St. John, i. 5. says, "In the BEGINNING was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word WAS GOD. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made BY HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM was not any thing made that was made;" and again, verse 14, "The word was made FLESH, and dwelt among us;" and again, xiv. 8. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known ME, Philip?" The first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is equally explicit in declaring this doctrine, which is further established in the first Epistle to Timothy, iii. 16. "And without con-

"controvery great is the mystery of godliness; GOD was manifested in the FLESH." Likewise in the Revelations, i. 11, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

To any man who believes in the Scriptures as the revealed word of God, these express declarations must unequivocally establish the truth, that Jesus Christ is God and not mere man. The divinity of the Holy Ghost is in like manner to be proved: For this purpose we have to consult the following passages: John, xiv. 16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the SPIRIT of truth;" and again in the same chapter, 26th verse, "The Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST, whom the Father will send in my name, HE shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you;" and again, in the fifteenth chapter, 26th verse, "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE shall testify of me;" and again in the sixteenth chapter, 13th verse, "When HE the Spirit of truth is come, HE will guide you into all truth."

In the Acts of the Apostles, chapter v. verse 3, Ananias is said to have "lied to the HOLY GHOST;" and in the fourth verse, to have "lied UNTO GOD;" and again in the thirteenth chapter, 2d verse, "The HOLY GHOST said, 'Separate ME Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them;" and in the fourth verse it is said, "They were sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

St. Paul's benediction to the Corinthians must not be unnoticed, viz. "THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THE LOVE OF GOD, AND THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH YOU ALL." St. John says in his first Epistle, fifth chapter, and 7th verse, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word,

"Word, and the Holy Ghost." The concluding part of the verse has been contested as an interpolation, and therefore I do not quote it.

I cannot possibly imagine how any man can admit the authority of Scripture, and yet shut his eyes to the express light the foregoing passages give us of the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; although human faculties cannot comprehend the manner in which this union of persons in the Godhead exists, any more than they can comprehend the mystery of the attraction of gravitation.

Whatever may be the abilities and learning of the gentleman who first replied to Mr. Paine, he has shown himself a miserable unsound expounder of Scripture. This will further appear in examining another gross blunder he has committed; he says, that "the immaculate conception of *Jesus*, "by the *Holy Spirit*, constitutes no essential article of *his* "creed, and certainly rests on much weaker evidence than "any other important fact of all the Gospels."

To discover the truth of this position, it is merely necessary to refer to the first chapter of St. Matthew, and the first and second chapters of St. Luke, and it will then be plain to the reader, that the important facts of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ Jesus are not more expressly and circumstantially related by the *same* Evangelists, than the account of the immaculate conception; and it rests with that gentleman to explain what privilege he possesses to reject the express declarations of Scripture in one instance, as it may suit his purpose, when they militate against Arianism and Socinianism, and yet admit the authority of the *identical* writers of the same Scripture in other points.

The same gentleman further asserts, that "No legitimate "rules of interpretation, and no circumstances of the Jewish "or Christian systems, make it necessary for us to regard the "Devil or Satan in any other light than that of an allegorical character." Here again this writer expressly sets up

himself against the word of God; for Christ says to the Jews, "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him," John, viii. 44. It is not easy to conceive how an *allegorical character*, or a *personification*, as this Author further calls the Devil, could be a murderer. If we turn to the fourth chapter of St. Matthew, we shall find it still harder to conceive how an *allegorical character* or *personification* should hold a conversation with Christ, should quote Scripture (as some of the Devil's children can do to this hour), should set our Saviour on a pinnacle of the Temple, should take him up into an exceeding high mountain, and show him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. But when men are determined to wrest the plainest expressions of the word of truth to their unchristian systems, there is no end to their impious absurdities, as will further appear plainly by the last remark this gentleman makes on Mr. Paine's pamphlet. He coincides with that Deist in ridiculing the history of Jonah, and compares it to a story he had heard of a black boy falling from a ship into the sea, and being devoured by a shark, and of the same shark being taken immediately; and, on his being opened, the boy was found in the stomach, eating his bread and cheese, which he had in his hand when he fell overboard.

If this man be really sincere in his belief of Revelation, how can he overlook the authority of Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith? St. Matthew, in the twelfth chapter and thirty-eighth verse, thus records of him: "Then certain
" of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we
" would see a sign from thee; but he answered, and said to
" them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a
" sign; and there shall be no sign given it, but the sign of
" the Prophet Jonas: FOR AS JONAS WAS THREE DAYS

" AND

"AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE WHALE'S BELLY; so shall
"the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart
"of the earth."

I cannot conjecture what may be the feelings of any other man; but as a believer in "Christ crucified, as the power
"of God and the wisdom of God," I would not be the author of the above-mentioned sneer for all the wealth, all the power this world contains.

From these brief remarks on this gentleman's reply, it appears that he is a perverter of Scripture, and that Thomas Paine himself is not farther removed from a knowledge of the truth; and every CHRISTIAN will exclaim with the poet,

NON TALI AUXILIO NEC DEFENSORIBUS ISTIS.

The second answer which appeared to Mr. Paine is anonymous. Suffice it to say briefly of it, that the writer has not met Mr. Paine on his own grounds, which is necessary in combating any deistical writer. The third answer is anonymous. The author thinks that the Christian religion is in danger of being overturned in Europe; and confounds Christianity with Popery. He may calm his apprehensions with the express declarations of Christ, who says, that "The gates
"of hell shall not prevail against his church; and though
"heaven and earth pass away, his word shall not pass
"away."

It is a vile derogation from the power and wisdom of God, to say that his religion stands in need of human support. It has existed in all countries, and under all forms of government; and to say that it "must necessarily" be upheld by any one, is contrary to historic fact, and to the actual situation of the church of Christ at this moment. Will any man pretend to say, that there are not Christians in every quarter of the habitable globe? And are there any two countries governed exactly alike?

The

The religion of Jesus will prevail until "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Whether this last-mentioned gentleman, who calls himself a Churchman, be a "Papist," or a "Protestant," I am at a loss to determine; but this is not a matter of much moment to the world; to himself it is of some consequence that he "halt not between two opinions." He confesses that there are some superstitions mixed with the Popish belief; therefore he cannot be a Papist, for no Papist allows that there is any imperfection in his faith: But again he speaks of Popery as religion; therefore he cannot be a Protestant; for Protestants expressly avow that Popery is antichristianism, and prove the fact from Scripture.

But what are these superstitions of Popery? Are they not establishing the idolatrous worship of saints and images, in place of the worship of Jesus? Have they not an office of prayer, in which they intreat the Virgin Mary to command her Son to grant their petitions? Is it not the practice of Popery to worship a bit of bread as God, and to complete the absurdity, to eat it as the very body of Christ, which the Scriptures tell us is in heaven? Does not Popery set up a satisfaction for sin, by the doctrine of purgatory, in opposition to the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Saviour of the world, by which only is there remission of sin? Is not the pardon of sin sold for money, by the force of pretended indulgences? Are not distinctions of meats observed, as meritorious, although Christ says that it is not what goeth into the body which defileth it?

Do not the articles of the Church of England expressly condemn these idle dreams of human invention as contradictory to the word of God? Do not the tenets of every Protestant church directly give them the lie? Are they not violations of the word of God?

If

If Popery be so harmless a thing, what fools were not John Hufs, Jerome of Prague, Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and the other martyrs of Jesus, at the time of the Reformation, to surrender their bodies to devouring flames, kindled by Popish bigotry? But some will say that this bigotry is done away, and Popery is changed from what it formerly was. How does this appear? Has there been repealed, or disavowed, a single decree of the Council of Trent? Is not the practice of Popery the same it ever was, only on a smaller scale? Does not the Inquisition exist, in all its horror, in Spain and Italy? Have six months elapsed since a man was put to death with torture in Naples, for "high treason against the Almighty;" for ridiculing the absurdity of a wafer being God? Have we not heard of the head of St. Januarius carried out to stop the late irruptions of Mount Vesuvius; and the body of another tutelar saint, called Carlos, exposed to the adoration of the populace in another town in Italy (Bologna I think), that a stop might be put to the progress of the French? Now I ask where is the essential difference between the faith and practice of Popery, and that of Heathenism?

For my part I see the closest, strongest resemblance between both systems; and I defy any man to deny the fact, and bring argument to his aid. If Popery be less sanguinary than formerly, the wonderful change is not due to any reformation in the tenets or practice of its adherents, but to the diminution of its power, which God effected by the Reformation. Let us therefore hear no more of Popery as religion, unless it be described as it truly is, a vile corruption of Christianity, which the hand of God is now almost visibly displayed in destroying, according to the prophecy of his holy Apostle John. Let us obey the "voice from heaven," which gives us this solemn admonition, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her sins have reached unto
 2 " heaven,

"heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."
Rev. xviii.

I cannot conclude this Preface without entreating 'all who profess to believe in Christ, to be diligent in searching the Scriptures, for they contain the words of eternal life. Life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel; let us walk honestly in the light. Christ has foretold that, before his second coming, there would be a great falling away. This prophecy we see now fulfilled. DEISM, ARIANISM, and SOCINIANISM, have made a fearful progress; and there is reason to apprehend that they will extend yet farther. "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea, for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
Rev. xii. 12.

Another sign of the times is, the appearance of "false prophets and false spirits." But Christ says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, will be the appearance of the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other." Matth. xxiv. 24, to the end.

In that day when we shall appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, may all who call on his name be presented without spot or wrinkle, in the white robes of righteousness, washed in the blood of the Lamb, slain for the sins of the whole world before the foundation thereof. HE WHICH TESTIFIETH THESE THINGS, SAITH, SURELY I COME QUICKLY. AMEN. EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS.

DOGMATISM EXPOSED,

&c. &c.

AFTER the full discussion which the evidences for the truth of the Christian Revelation have undergone; after the able replies which have, from time to time, been made to the works of unbelievers as they have started up; after the subject appeared to have been exhausted; it was not to be expected that any fresh attack would have been made; or, if there should, that new ground would have been taken: That as the sneering cavils of Voltaire, the subtilty of Hume, the sophistry of Bolingbroke, the mistatement of historic facts, and misconstruction of ancient authors, by Gibbon, had been severally exposed, and their arguments confuted *, succeeding Deists might

* See JOHN LELAND's View of Deistical Writers; The Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation, by the same; SHERLOCK's Trial of the Witnesses; WEST on the Resurrection; LORD LYTTTELTON on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul; WATSON's Apology; and, LETTERS OF CERTAIN JEWS TO VOLTAIRE—The last-mentioned work is said to come from the pen of a French Abbé.

have seen the folly of obtruding on the world, objections to religion which had been already proved to be unfounded. But in vain does the reader, conversant in deistical writings, look for fresh matter in Mr. Paine's late publication, which he is pleased to call the *AGE OF REASON*,—a very high-sounding title indeed; as if all mankind had been enveloped in darkness, totally unenlightened by a ray of the knowledge of the one true God, until the *Age of Reason* commenced by the appearance of Mr. Paine's book, which is to work a miraculous revolution, by leading men from error to truth, from delusion to certainty. But it is rather extraordinary that, with much scurrility, Mr. Paine has done little else than repeat the stale objections of the deistical writers above mentioned. I should find it no difficult matter to prove this by comparing his words with theirs; I shall content myself with stating the fact, as any person who chuses to take the trouble may satisfy himself by having recourse to their works. If it should be asked here, why I have undertaken a reply to Mr. Paine, if it be true that he has only made objections to Revelation which are not new, and which have already been refuted, the answer is obvious—Many persons will read Mr. Paine's book, who probably have never heard of those illustrious writers, who have vindicated the truth of Christianity from the sophistry of pretended philosophers: Therefore it seems necessary that there should accompany it a brief confutation of the errors with which it most plentifully abounds, as many who will read it will not have the opportu-

nity, many will not take the trouble, of consulting the works of those learned men who have so ably defended the Christian Revelation.

There is so little method observed by Mr. Paine, so loose and desultory are his arguments, or rather his assertions, that it is not easy to reduce them to any order. I shall, therefore, through necessity, in general state his objections in the order in which they stand, and then reply to them, having first taken notice of what he says he believes, which belief is expressed in the beginning and the end of his production. He says in the beginning, "I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe the equality of Man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy." In the end he says, "I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the Power which gave me existence is able to continue it in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began."

Upon this creed of Mr. Paine, I have only briefly to remark, that in every civilized nation in Europe the existence of one God, and a future state, are universally believed; but if we look into ancient history, we have the most incontestable proofs that a multiplicity of idols were worshipped by every nation un-

der heaven, except the Jewish people, who alone had the knowledge of one true God, and that all the philosophers of antiquity were in doubt as to the certainty of a future state, previous to the coming of CHRIST, as may be seen at large by consulting CICERO'S treatise of the Nature of the Gods. So true it is that life and immortality have been brought to light through the Gospel: Therefore the diffusion of the knowledge of one God, and the belief of a future state, are to be ascribed to that very revelation, by which these important truths are so fully expressed, and which is the object of Mr. Paine's attack, although he himself, in common with the rest of mankind, from that source derives any knowledge he possesses on the subject. In like manner Revelation teaches, that God made all mankind of one family, and it is the distinguishing character of Christianity, that it strictly enjoins the loving our neighbour as ourselves.

Mr. Paine having stated what he believes, proceeds to tell us what he does not believe. He says, " I do not believe in the creed professed by the
 " Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the
 " Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the
 " Protestant church, nor by any church that I know
 " of. My own mind is my own church. All na-
 " tional institutions of churches, whether Jewish,
 " Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than
 " human inventions set up to terrify and enslave man-
 " kind, and monopolize power or profit." In the
 next page he says, " Every national church or reli-
 " gion

“ gion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, the Apostles and Saints; and the Turks their Mahomet; as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.”

I cannot conceive how any man can presume to sit down and write on a subject of which he is so ignorant as Mr. Paine appears to be of his, from the preceding extracts.

The Mahometan religion was propagated by the sword, and was calculated for conquest; but this objection cannot be made to the Jewish or Christian religions, nor could the instruments employed to establish them have any sinister motive. Moses established a form of government among the Jews, which did not give any power to his posterity, nor was he distinguished from his countrymen by wealth or distinction, except the distinction of greater labour.—The *tribe* to which Moses belonged had no inheritance among the children of Israel, and his descendants were in no one thing distinguished from the rest of the Levites. It is scarcely necessary to say a word on the motives and circumstances of Christ and his Apostles; any person who opens the New Testament must see that they could not have it in contemplation to “terrify and to enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit:” For Christ says expressly, that his kingdom was not of this world; and his example proved the truth of this declaration. He forewarned his disciples of the hatred, wherewith men would hate

hate them without a cause, that they should be persecuted even to death, and their enemies should imagine that they were doing acceptable service to God. If, therefore, any national church be a "human invention set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit," that church departs from the precepts of genuine Christianity, which does not authorise any such proceeding.

Mr. Paine seems to be so well pleased with himself, that he disdains to have recourse to investigation on any subject: He himself says in the very work now under discussion, that there are "two distinct classes of what are called thoughts; those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord." He says, "I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining; and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have." In truth it appears that Mr. Paine's ability in examining his thoughts is very feeble, or he would have easily distinguished between the genuine precepts and doctrines of Christianity, as recorded in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and the corruptions which some national churches have introduced.

Perhaps he thinks that this kind of *inspiration*, which he pretends to (for, before I read his book, I thought with John Locke, that all our ideas arise from sensation and reflection), supersedes the necessity of inquiry.

quity. Certain it is, from his own account, his ignorance or mistake of his subject must arise either from the *nature* of his thoughts or his want of ability to examine them; but if he had deigned to consult authority on the subject, he would have found that every writer of ecclesiastical history, from Eusebius down to Mosheim, attributes the decay of pure Christianity to its establishment in temporal power by Constantine and his successors. He would have seen that Christianity subsisted above three hundred years under the most malignant persecutions of the ruling powers of the earth; its professors were dragged to torture and to death, during that period, for confessing that they were Christians; therefore their faith was not a system "set up to terrify or enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit." Need it be mentioned that all the Apostles sealed the truth of their mission with their blood, except St. John? To discover how far the way to God is open to every man alike, we have only to consider the gross ignorance of the most polished nations of antiquity in religious truth, and the knowledge of God; and the state of those countries of the earth which remain unenlightened by the Gospel at this day. But of this I shall say more hereafter.

Mr. Paine says, that "Revelation, when applied to religion, is something communicated *immediately* from God to man." He says further, "No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases." I perfectly agree with Mr. Paine in this last sentiment; but

but he says, that “ Admitting that something has
 “ been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed
 “ to any other person, it is revelation to that person
 “ only : When he tells it to a second person, a second
 “ to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to
 “ be revelation to all those persons. It is revelation
 “ to the first person only, and hearsay to every other ;
 “ and consequently they are not obliged to believe
 “ it.”—It certainly is true, that although a person
 may have had a revelation from God, I am not bound
 to believe his *bare assertion of the fact* ; but if the pur-
 port of that revelation be to call men to the pure
 adoration of God, to works of holiness and righteous-
 ness ; and if the person, in confirmation of his asser-
 tion, shall perform such wondrous works as are evi-
 dently beyond human ability—if a man four days in
 the grave be raised to life ; if one born blind be made
 to see ; if one lame from his mother’s womb be made
 to walk when desired ; and such wonderful things be
 frequently wrought in confirmation of a revelation,
 such as I have stated, where there cannot be any
 selfish motive to actuate the person, but rather every
 consideration of personal safety to prevent him—I
 cannot attribute these things to any power but the
 finger of God manifestly displayed. If I have not
 seen those events, but live posterior to them, then
 the historic and other evidence must be the subject
 matter of discussion, and, according to the credibility,
 I am to decide. To this main point we shall come
 presently.

The looseness and inaccuracy of Mr. Paine is visible in every step, and particularly when he says, "When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hand of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so, and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so, the commandments carrying no internal evidence of divinity with them." Here Mr. Paine positively asserts that the Jews had no *authority* (as he terms it) for believing Moses, than his *telling* them such and such things; but he might have condescended to give us some argument in support of his opinion, for *bold unqualified assertion* is no argument, nor can it prove a negative proposition.

But had Moses been unable to give any proof in support of his declaration, that the commandments were delivered to him by the Almighty; had the children of Israel seen no extraordinary manifestation of supernatural power displayed before them; it is not very probable, indeed it is absurd to think it possible, that they should believe the bare assertion of any man, or that their posterity should to this day follow the ordinances of that man, unless he had, by incontestable evidence, proved the reality of his mission to their fathers.

A parallel is next attempted to be drawn between the promulgation of the Mahometan religion, and the Jewish and Christian:

D

"When

“ When I am told that the Koran was written in
 “ heaven, and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the
 “ account comes to near the same kind of hearsay
 “ evidence and second-hand authority as the former.
 “ I did not see the angel myself, and therefore I have
 “ a right not to believe it. When I am also told that
 “ a woman said, or gave out, that she was with child
 “ without any cohabitation with a man, and that her
 “ betrothed husband, Joseph, said that an angel told
 “ him so, I have a right to believe them or not. Such
 “ a circumstance required a much stronger evi-
 “ dence than their bare word for it, but we have not
 “ even this, for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any
 “ such matter themselves. It is only reported by
 “ others that they said so. It is hearsay upon hear-
 “ say; and I do not chuse to rest my belief upon such
 “ evidence.” From this extract it appears that Mr.
 Paine looks upon the Christian and Jewish Revela-
 tions as human inventions, as well as the religion of
 Mahomet.

The religion of Mahomet, every person acquaint-
 ed with history knows was propagated by the sword.
 Mahomet did not give his followers any proof of his
 mission, he barely told them that he was divinely
 commissioned; in his history it is not pretended that
 any person *saw* the angel who, he said, brought him
 the Koran from heaven; therefore Mr. Paine is cer-
 tainly right not to believe the assertion, unaccom-
 panied as it is with any collateral proof, particularly
 when the doctrines of the Koran, the internal evi-
 dence,

dence, is considered. That it was intended as an incitement to conquest, cannot be denied ; for to all his followers who should fall in battle paradise is promised. That it addressed itself to the vices of men, by allowing polygamy, is equally evident to any person who will open the book ; and the future rewards promised are sensual in the extreme.

Previously to Mahomet's pretending to a mission from heaven, he was in opulent circumstances. He had married a rich widow ; he himself had traversed the Eastern countries with merchandise, and was well acquainted with the genius of the inhabitants, who were sunk in the most deplorable ignorance, and fit objects for a daring impostor to practise on. Yet we find that opposition was made to him by the Arabs, and he was obliged to fly from Mecca ; nor did he return thither but with force of arms, and by these means was his religion propagated. The only *public miracle* which he pretended to work, in confirmation of his mission, was the clumsy trick of a dove trained to pick a pea out of his ear ; and he *told* his stupid followers that this dove communicated the divine will to him. Amidst an heap of absurdity, the Koran contains some little morality ; but let it be remembered, that a Christian monk and a Jew were among the close friends of Mahomet, and we shall then know how to account for the phenomenon. I refer my reader to the Koran for the truth of this brief statement of its doctrines. The history of the East will satisfy any inquirer of the means by which Mahometanism was propagated.

The *Koran* does nowhere mention that Mahomet had performed any miracle in the presence of *all the people*; therefore it appears on the face of the book that they had only his word for his being sent from God. But is this the account the *Bible* gives of the Mosaic and Christian revelations? Surely it is very different. It is *there recorded*, that when Moses was called, he expressed the greatest reluctance to go to the children of Israel*. He says, "Behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." And even after his rod had been turned into a serpent before him, and the serpent into a rod again, he is unwilling to undertake the office of delivering his brethren. He endeavours to excuse himself by saying that he is not eloquent; and further he says, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send." He is then informed that Aaron his brother should be with him, and that God should teach them what they should do; and that Moses should take the rod in his hand, wherewith he should do signs.

Moses no longer hesitates, when he is told that he can give the children of his people proofs of his mission: He obeys; "and the signs were done in the sight of the people, and the people believed."

The subsequent account of the signs and wonders displayed on the land of Egypt, shows that they were of the most public nature, as was the passage of the

* Exodus, iv.

Red Sea, and the giving of the law from Mount Sinai; where it is said *, that “ *all the people* saw the “ thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of “ the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: And “ when the people saw it they removed, and stood “ afar off; and they said unto Moses, Speak thou “ with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak “ with us, lest we die.” The *scriptural* account of the Gospel dispensation is, that it was confirmed by numberless miracles, wrought in public †. Let us now consider the evidence which we have, at this day, of the truth of the Scriptures.

It is allowed on all hands that we have no authentic accounts of the Assyrian, Egyptian, Chaldean, or Persian empires, transmitted to us by historians of these respective countries, exclusive of the historic part of the Bible. To the Grecian writers we are indebted for the little recorded of them. Herodotus, the first prose writer of the Greeks, lived above a thousand years after Moses; therefore we cannot have the testimony of *cotemporary* writers, to confirm or confute the *Mosaic* history. The Jews were little known to the Greeks until the time of Alexander and his successors. It is well known that Alexander entered Jerusalem, sacrificed at the temple, and allowed the Jews the free exercise of their religion ‡. After his death they were occasionally under the dominion of the Egyptians and Syrians, and sometimes were

* Exodus, xx.

† See the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, *passim*.

‡ See Josephus's Antiquities.

free, until they at last became subject to the Romans, in the days of Pompey, very shortly before the coming of Christ.

The darkness in which the history of the ancient Eastern empires is involved, is so great, that Sir Isaac Newton, in his Chronology, has been obliged to have recourse to the history of the Bible, to throw light on these remote events.

It is a strong argument for the truth of the history of the Bible, that, at the period when all other countries were ignorant of the true principles of good government, and subject to the capricious will of ferocious tyrants, the Jews alone enjoyed the blessings of a well-constituted government. The civil constitution of that government has descended to us; and I will venture to assert, that the wisdom of futurity has not been able to devise one more calculated for the happiness of the people, and for efficient defensive vigour in the state. Their superiority in true religious knowledge must be manifest to any person acquainted with the horrid, idolatrous practices of all the rest of the world at that time. To what then can we attribute the strange phenomenon of the Jews so far excelling the rest of the world in civil and religious knowledge? Is it possible to account for it on any other ground than this, that their law was given as their history records? The ceremonial part of that law was most wisely calculated to keep them separate from the idolatrous nations which surrounded them, but was extremely burdensome and expensive. It appears impossible to ac-
count

count for their having originally submitted to so heavy a burden, or for their scattered posterity to this day observing as many of these ceremonies, as they are by their law permitted, out of Jerusalem, on any other supposition than that their fathers received the commandments in the manner related. If a parallel instance can be adduced in the history of mankind, I will then, and not till then, allow that there is no force in the argument.

Although these considerations are strong, yet there are much stronger to be insisted on.

In every page of the New Testament there is reference made to the Old. To prove this fully, would be to transcribe almost the entire New Testament: Any man may satisfy himself by opening it in any part. Christ, in his controversies with the Jewish doctors, appeals constantly to the writings of the Old Testament. He quotes Moses and David, and the other prophets, as authorities. The same practice is uniformly adhered to by the Apostles, in the speeches recorded in the Acts, and in their Epistles. Indeed every line of the New Testament shows that it professes to be founded on the Old, which was merely preparatory to the Gospel dispensation. It follows, that the Christian religion once proved to be of divine origin, the truth of the Mosaic revelation will be fully established.

The argument for the truth of the Christian revelation is taken usually from the completion of the prophecies of the Old Testament, from the miracles wrought by Christ and his Apostles, and from the propa-

propagation of the Gospel, by instruments seemingly unequal to the task ;—this is called the external evidence. The nature of the doctrine of the Gospel has likewise been insisted on with much force ;—and this is called the internal evidence. To these I shall add another argument—the completion of some of the prophecies of the New Testament.

It is well known that the Bible was translated into the Greek language, by order of Ptolomy Philadelphus, two hundred and fifty years before Christ ; therefore the prophecies of the Old Testament were not *fabricated* posterior to their alleged completion in Christ ; and I might fairly commence with the argument from prophecy, which is prior in point of time to that from the miracles of the New Testament : But in order to avoid the cavils of Deists, who might assert, however unjustly, that I argued in a circle, I shall begin with the consideration of the history of Christ and his Apostles.

There is no history of ancient times, which has descended to us so well authenticated as that under consideration.

The disciples of Christ preached his doctrine in every part of the habitable world ; and the writings of the Evangelists, and the Epistles, were circulated among all the churches ; and large extracts were made from them, by different writers, even in the first century.

To doubt this, is at once to call in question all ancient history, and to avow that assent is not to be given to any thing of which we have not ocular

demonstration. We have as much, or rather more reason to doubt that such a person as Julius Cæsar existed, or that he performed the actions ascribed to him, as to doubt the truth of the history of Christ and his apostles. That so obscure a person as the reputed son of a poor carpenter, and a few illiterate fishermen, should propagate a religion, detested, however unjustly, by their own countrymen and by the Heathens, without having recourse to force; that this religion should, in despite of the most cruel persecutions by the Jewish and Heathen governments and priests, prevail in every part of the world; that the instruments of establishing it should lay down their lives, should attest their mission with their blood; are facts that cannot be accounted for, except on one supposition—that they were divinely commissioned, and gave convincing proofs to the world by performing the miracles recorded. The truth is, that if the miracles, said to have been wrought by Christ and his apostles, were not performed, Christianity is a fiction; but the reality of these miracles has not been called in question by the most inveterate enemy Christianity ever had to contend with. The Emperor Julian wanted neither inclination, opportunity, nor ability, to expose any imposture; if any there had been, in the religion of Christ. But any person may convince himself, by opening his works, that he has not dared to deny the reality of the miracles of Christ. He admits they were wrought: But how? (*Risum teneatis?*) He says, that Christ learned the art of magic in Egypt, and by that

means were his wondrous works performed ; that is, as Christ argued with the Jews, when they attributed the miracles he wrought before them, to the same cause, the devil is employed to act against his own interests.

Thus it appears we have the testimony of the bitterest foe to Christianity, to establish its truth. As Julian lived in the fourth century, it must be granted, that, in all probability, there were then extant many collateral authorities on the subject of Christianity, which have not descended to us. It is certain that many books on the subject must have perished when Rome was taken by Attila, and when the library of Alexandria was destroyed by the Saracens*.

It is not improbable that Deists would deny the fact, that such a person as Christ ever existed, were it not that Heathen writers make mention of the circumstance. Tacitus lived about fifty years after the crucifixion, which he mentions to have taken place when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judæa. He says but little of the Christians, except that they were accused by the Heathens of entertaining what he calls *malefica superstitio*, a malignant superstition ; and that Nero threw on them the odium of having

* Here it may not be amiss to remark, that the *historic fact* of Christ having performed his miracles, being admitted by an enemy to his religion, who was well qualified to investigate the truth, and who had every opportunity of so doing, it is rather curious that Mr. David Hume should, *fourteen hundred years* after Julian, write an elaborate *metaphysical* treatise, the object of which is to prove, that no such events could have taken place.

set fire to Rome, of which nefarious act he had been guilty.

Pliny the younger was governor of Bithynia, under the Emperor Trajan. The doctrines of Christianity had so early made such progress even in that distant province, that Pliny says the temples of the Gods had been deserted: The army and the tribunals were filled with Christians. He made every inquiry into the nature of their doctrines and practices. He wrote to the Emperor, that all he could discover, even from those who, through fear of death, burned incense to the Emperor's image, and blasphemed the name of Christ, was, that the sum of their fault, or their error, as he calls it, was, that they used to assemble before day, and sing a hymn to Christ as to God; that they bound themselves by an oath not to steal, rob, or commit adultery, and to be faithful to their engagements. This Heathen governor confesses that he had the inhumanity to put women to the torture to discover the truth, and that he had sent all to execution who barely acknowledged they were Christians; although it appears from his own account they were the best subjects in his province.

Thus it appears we have collateral testimony of Heathen writers for the truth of the evangelical account of the crucifixion, of the widely-extended propagation of the Gospel, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and of the cruel treatment which Christ foretold his virtuous followers should experience from their enemies.

There is another Heathen writer who records a circumstance too remarkable to be passed over.

The Emperor Julian undertook to give the world a proof of the falsity of the Christian religion, by rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem for the purpose of establishing the Jews in the exercise of their religion, which Christ and his apostles had declared to be for ever abrogated, except the moral part. Ammianus Marcellinus, an Heathen historian, relates that balls of fire burst from the earth, and overturned the workmen, their implements, and the materials for building. The deistical Gibbon, in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, is much astonished that so grave and faithful an historian should record this fact; but he cannot prove its falsity; nor is it possible to believe that Ammianus, an enemy to Christianity, should give it a place in his history, had it not been attested to him in such a manner as that it was impossible for him to refuse his assent.

It has never been denied that the evangelical account of Christ and his apostles, as far as relates to their education and circumstances in the world, is true. It is historic fact that the Christian religion triumphed over the inveterate prejudices and persecutions of Jews and Heathens. It is totally incomprehensible how this great event should happen by the *mere personal power* of twelve or thirteen individuals, uninvested with the smallest temporal authority. They brought no armies into the field; they had no revenues; on the contrary, they were in the most indigent circumstances. They were hated and
ppressed

oppressed by all the powers of the world : They had also to cope with the prejudices and vices of men. They strictly required their followers, that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live righteously, soberly, and godly. They were examples of strict purity of life to all men ; and they suffered the most dreadful tortures, and death itself, in confirmation of their apostleship. Under these circumstances it plainly appears impossible that they should have made one proselyte to a religion, despised and persecuted, which required such strict self-denial, had they not been able to give the most irrefragable proofs of their mission from God, by doing works evidently beyond mere human ability.

The conversion of St. Paul, from a persecutor to an Apostle of Christ, is a remarkable proof of the truth of Christianity. It appears that he was the most bitter enemy to the Christians ; he was consenting, as he expresses it himself, to the death of Stephen, and kept the clothes of those who stoned him ; he was commissioned by the high-priest to persecute the Christians ; he was suddenly converted, and preached Christ. It cannot be supposed that he could be under the influence of delusion ; he was a very learned man, as his Epistles still extant prove ; he was not an hot-headed enthusiast labouring under error, for when the Roman captain was about to scourge him, he pleaded his privilege as a Roman citizen ; and instead of rejoicing in persecution, as some mistaken sectaries have done, to save himself from the oppression

sion of his enraged countrymen, he refused to be tried by them, and appealed to Cæsar.

I leave it to Deists to explain why Paul should become a profelyte to a doctrine he had abhorred and endeavoured to destroy; why he should expose himself to the detestation and persecution of his countrymen; why he should chuse reproach, poverty, and labour, for comfort, authority, and ease, through any other motive than that related by himself. If any man will undertake to say, that the Epistles which go by his name are not *bonâ fide* his, it is to be expected that some reason will be given for that assertion, otherwise it can be treated no otherwise than with contempt*.

Thus it appears that the primitive Christians must have had stronger evidence than the word of Mary or Joseph for what they told relative to the miraculous conception, or they would not have believed. The cavil, that "Neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves," is scarcely worth an answer; it was written by those who were able to give convincing proofs of the truth of what they asserted.

If it be impossible to account for the establishment of the religion of Christ by any means, except those which are recorded in the Scriptures, viz. the power of God manifested in the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, it is a matter of equal difficulty to

*See Lord Lyttelton on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul;—a short work, most admirably reasoned, to which the Deists have never been able to reply.

be solved how the doctrines of the Gospel, and the pure morality of its precepts, should so far excel the united wisdom of Greece and Rome.

It would open a large field of discussion to show the vile corruptions which universally prevailed in the Heathen nations in their religious worship; to detail their immoral, obscene, and cruel worship of their false deities; their women prostituting themselves as a part of religious worship; their offering up human victims to their idols of stick and stone; and which horrible practices were sanctioned by their several governments; and have, strange to tell! been the subject of panegyric to a writer of the present day*.

The gross ignorance of all their philosophers in religious truths of the greatest import might be described at full length; but the limits I have prescribed to myself will not allow a full delineation of Heathen darkness. To have a full and concise view of it, it is only requisite to read the first chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, from the 25th verse to the end, and the full proof of his statement, as collected from Heathen writers, *in their own words*, and fully displayed by the late learned John Leland, in his admirably written treatise on the Advantage and Necessity of the Christian Revelation. Suffice it to say, that there was not a nation on the earth before the coming of Christ, except the Jews, where the most stupid immoral idolatry was not practised and

* Gibbon—who speaks of the *elegant* Heathen mythology.

established by law; nor was there a sect of philosophers, or even an individual one, who had any certainty of light as to the nature and attributes of God, or that great sanction of human actions, a future state of rewards and punishment.

I hope there is no person, at this day, ignorant of the explicit declaration of the Gospel on these important subjects.

The conciseness and plainness with which the religious duty of man is there expressed, is most wonderful: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself."

In like manner, the certainty of a future state is most copiously expressed in almost every chapter of the New Testament.

The argument from prophecy now remains to be considered. I have already mentioned that the Old Testament was translated into the Greek language long before the coming of Christ; therefore no man can say that the writings of the Prophets were forged after the coming of Christ. Independent of that historic fact, there is another proof which cannot be questioned; we find that such of the Jews who stupidly attributed the miracles of Christ to the power of the devil, endeavoured to oppose the writing of their Prophets to his doctrines; but with the same success, for he applied the predictions of the Prophets relating to a Messiah to himself; and in so doing, quoted their express words; therefore the prophetic writing must have been in existence before him.

him. Now if these prophecies were of such a nature that the express time of the appearance of the person promised, his descent, his office, his sufferings, his exaltation, and many other circumstances, were so particularly pointed out that they could not apply, except to Christ, their completion in him is not only a proof of his mission, but of the divine inspirations of Prophets, from Moses to Malachi. To avoid making long extracts, I refer the reader to the following passages in the Old Testament: Genesis, xlix. 10.—Daniel, ix. 24, 25, 26.—Haggai, ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.—Malachi, iii. 1.—Isaiah, vii. 14.; ix. 6, 7.; xi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.; xl. xlii. 1. lii. liii. lxi. lxv.—Deuteron. xviii. 15.—Psalm ii. xxii. xxxv. xli. 9. xlv. lxviii. lxix. lxxii. lxxxix. cx.—Jeremiah, xxiii. 5, 6.—Micah, v. 2. These references are but a few of those which might be cited, which relate to Jesus Christ; but they are sufficiently explicit. To quote all the prophecies relating to the history of the Jews, and their subsequent completion, would far exceed the limits of this work.

The history of Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, fully proves the exact completion of these prophecies, so exactly as to the time of his appearance, his lineage, his office, his sufferings and exaltation, that they cannot be applied to any other person.

The prophecies of the New Testament have been in part fulfilled; part yet remains to be fulfilled.

The Apocalypse contains predictions of the state of the church of Christ, from the time when St. John

wrote it, in the isle of Patmos, in the reign of Domitian, until the final consummation of all things; however, so much has been so evidently fulfilled, that commentators now find little difficulty in ascertaining the exact period of prophetic account in which we now live. It has been fully proved by Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. More, Joseph Mede, and Bishop Newton, that the papal power is described in the 13th, 17th, and 18th chapters of the Apocalypse, and that this power is to continue exactly twelve hundred and sixty years; on the expiration of which the kingdom of Christ will commence. The establishment of the papal power is dated from the year 606, when the Pope assumed the title of Universal Bishop, and dedicated the temple of the Pantheon to the worship of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. It is a remarkable proof of the truth of this interpretation, that a treatise grounded on it was published by a commentator, in the year 1701, in which he expressly refers the overthrow of the French monarchy to the very year in which it happened.

It is not to be omitted, that Christ foretold the destruction of Jerusalem before the generation in which he lived should pass away; Matth. xxiv. It is historic fact, that this event took place in the reign of Vespasian; and that John, the beloved disciple of Christ, was sent into banishment by the son of Vespasian.

There is another argument from the prophecies, both of the Old and New Testament, which is too remarkable to be omitted.

Indeed,

Indeed, I do not at present recollect that any writer has insisted on the circumstance so fully, or attributed that force to it, which it carries irresistibly : I mean the completion of the prophecies relative to the Jews, in the situation wherein we see them at this day.

The history of the universe does not exhibit another instance of a people, dispersed into every quarter of the globe, and remaining for more than *seventeen hundred years* in the midst of all nations, and yet unmixed with any. When the Roman empire was overturned by the barbarians, the victors and vanquished every-where coalesced. In this country, the descendants of Britons, Picts, Scots, Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, form one people ; but over every inhabited part of the globe, the Jews continue, for so many centuries, a separate people—an existing proof to the world of the truth of the prophetic writings of the Old and New Testament ; and thus will they continue until the fulness of the Gentiles be come, when the same writings affirm they will be collected from every nation, whither they are now dispersed.

The peculiar circumstances of this people, a standing miracle to all the world ; the treatment they have met with at different periods, their being a by-word among the nations, their never obtaining a fixed settlement in any part of the world, have been foretold by their own prophets ; and no earthly cause can be assigned for their not coalescing with any of the people among whom they dwell. If it be asserted

that their continuing separate is owing to their observance of the Mosaic law, that is merely begging the question, for the difficulty still recurs, why they do so; why they, of all people, should adhere so pertinaciously to their paternal customs, and continue separate in the midst of all other nations, when a similar instance is no-where to be found in the diversified history of man.

They exhibit to the reasoning mind, a full proof of the Mosaic dispensation, by their observance of his laws, to this hour. Their actual situation has been foretold by the prophetic writers in the Old Testament, particularly by Moses and Isaiah, by the Evangelists, and by St. Paul in his Epistles; and the event irrefragably confirms the predictions.

I have now endeavoured to give a brief abstract of the evidences for Christianity, from historic fact, from the superiority of its doctrines, and from the completion of prophecy; and trust, I have shown that belief in Revelation is founded on deductions from reason, that there is a mass of evidence fully sufficient to convince any unprejudiced mind that will apply to a full consideration of the subject.

If I have succeeded in this attempt (as I think I have), it follows necessarily that Mr. Paine's objections fall to the ground, and I might bring this work to a speedy close; but having heard some men extol Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason* as the *best written book* they had met with, I shall, on that very account, proceed to a further consideration of his most remarkable assertions, and I pledge myself to convict him

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of ignorance of his subject, and of the grossest misstatement. It is with reluctance I enter on this task, not on account of any apprehended difficulty in the undertaking, but the disgust which I must necessarily feel in the performance.

Mr. Paine endeavours to account for "the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God, from the circumstance of the Heathen mythology having still some fashion and repute in the world; for that all the extraordinary men that lived under the Heathen mythology were reputed to be the sons of some of their gods." He further says, that "the Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the Heathen mythology, never credited the story." All this is extremely childish; the Heathen mythology was firmly believed by almost all the world at the coming of Christ, and even for some considerable time after. The writings and belief of that profound statesman and able historian, Tacitus, give a full proof of this fact; but not an hundredth or a thousandth part of the great men who lived under that mythology, were reputed to be sons of some of their gods, but only some who lived in remote and fabulous antiquity; for we know the contempt which Alexander drew on himself, from the Macedonians, above three hundred years before the birth of Christ, for pretending to be the son of Jupiter Ammon: And although Augustus, Tiberius, &c. arrogated divine honours, they did not say that any god was their father; they derived their claims from

from a *Senatus Consultum*—in plain English, from a decree of the Roman senate.

When Mr. Paine says that the Jews never credited the story, he seems to be ignorant that the first converts to Christianity were Jews; for although the majority of that people did not believe, yet very many thousands did. The credit which the primitive Christians gave to this story, as Mr. Paine calls it, was owing to the powers which the Apostles displayed in confirmation of it.

This *very accurate* Mr. Paine is next pleased to say, that “The trinity of Gods was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was *twenty or thirty thousand*. The statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus. The deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints.” Surely no man can at this day be ignorant, that the Christian doctrine expressly says, that there is but one God, although it reveals the union of three persons in the Godhead: Certainly it is above human reason to comprehend the manner of this union; but, I believe, few people doubt that they have a soul, because they cannot comprehend how it is united to the body. The abominable practice of worshipping the images of Mary, and of the saints, is not chargeable on Christianity, for the Scriptures expressly forbid idolatry; nor was there any thing of the kind practised for some centuries after Christ; therefore the abominations of the Greek and Roman churches are not to be attributed to the religion of Christ, nor is the “Christian theory little else than the idolatry of the
“ ancient

“ancient mythologists:”—It might, with as much truth, be asserted, that light and darkness are the same thing. Mr. Paine is pleased to say, “That nothing he has said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ; he was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind.” I agree with Mr. Paine as to the morality preached and practised by Jesus Christ; but he says, “That similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius and some of the Greek philosophers many years before, by the Quakers since, and by good men in all ages.”

It is truly tiresome to read a series of assertions, in support of which not a proof is attempted to be brought. Why has not Mr. Paine given us quotations from Confucius and the Greek philosophers? With the writings of Confucius I do not profess to be acquainted, nor do I believe Mr. Paine knows any thing of them. With regard to the Greek philosophers, I am certain he is completely ignorant of their morality, for otherwise he would have forborn to make mention of them. Is this morality to be found in Plato, who, in his Commonwealth, allows *pæderasty* as a reward to those who essentially serve the state? Does he find it in the writings of the Stoics, who supported the doctrine of fate, as paramount to their gods? Does he find it with the Epicureans, who denied a superintending providence, and preached up pleasure as the only good? Does he find it in the idolatrous

latrous practice of Socrates, the wisest of their philosophers? I will answer, that it is no-where to be found, nor can any man produce the passage in any of the Greek philosophers' writings.

When Mr. Paine mentions the morality of the Quakers, is he ignorant that George Fox was the founder of that sect, above *sixteen hundred years* after the birth of Christ; and that they profess themselves to be Christians? The expression, of good men in all ages preaching this morality, is so vague, that there is no knowing the meaning of the author. However, Mr. Paine is pleased to say, that "the Christian morality has never been *exceeded*;" but he has totally failed in showing that it has been equalled.

The resurrection and ascension are next attacked, and called a "wretched contrivance." Mr. Paine says, that "A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all and universal;" then, according to this opinion, it is necessary that the resurrection and ascension should have taken place, not only in the view of all Jerusalem, but of every person who has lived since the time of Christ's appearance; no matter what evidence we have at this day, we ought to have a clear demonstration. Truly it should seem that the Almighty must every day give a preternatural proof of the truth of his word, until what is a *departure* from the law of nature shall seem to be a *law of nature*. May it not justly be replied to such arrogant demands, in the words of Christ himself, *They have Moses and the Prophets: If they*
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bear not them, neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead. The evidence for the resurrection of Christ is sufficiently strong to convince any unprejudiced mind, as has been shown already. It was strong enough to convince many thousands of the Jews, for instead of only "eight or nine persons" being witnesses of this great event, St. Paul, who is rather better authority than Mr. Paine, says that "Christ rose the third day according to the Scriptures; that he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the Apostles; and last of all he was seen of me, as of one born out of due time." Mr. Paine says, "That the best surviving evidence we now have respecting this affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say it is not true." No doubt there are many able men among the Jews; but it does not follow that they are exclusively qualified upon an historic fact; there are many men in this country possessed of as much learning, as much mental acuteness, as any Jew. It is not easy to determine what Mr. Paine means in saying, that they are the *best surviving evidence*, unless he means that the Jews of the present day were alive seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago; for unless his words be taken in that sense, the Jews are not surviving evidence, any more than any other men of the present generation,

except that their *present state* is a standing proof of the truth of the Scriptures ; and it is in this way only that they have been cited as a proof of the truth of the story, as Mr. Paine is pleased to call it.

Our *learned* author makes a comparison between the "Heathen-story of the giants making war against Jupiter, and a story of the *Christian mythologists*, "who, he says, tell that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him in a pit."

Mr. Paine has here made a *trifling* mistake. I take it for granted, that, by the Christian mythologists, he means the Apostles of Christ. Now although MILTON, in his Poem of PARADISE LOST, has, in very poetical language, told us a long story of Satan making war against God, and of his being "shut in a pit;" yet this circumstance is not mentioned in Scripture. All that we read there on this subject, is to be found in the 2d Epistle of St. Peter, in the Epistle general of St. Jude, and in the Book of Revelations. St. Peter says, God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell ; and delivered them in chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. St. Jude, in exhorting Christians to obedience, reminds them, that "*the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.*" In the Apocalypse we find, that in the twelfth chap-

ter it is written : *There was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven ; and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* And likewise in the 20th chapter : *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand ; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.* All that can fairly be collected from St. Peter and St. Jude is, that a number of angels had disobeyed, and were punished : But there is no mention whatever of SATAN, or of him or them having made war ; it is said they sinned, or kept not their first estate. In the Apocalypse there is : But let it be remembered that this book relates entirely and solely to the state of Christ's church, *from the time of St. John to the consummation of all things* : It is entirely prophetic, and the expressions are often allegoric. In the 12th chapter the church of Christ is represented under the similitude of a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars ; and the persecution which the church should meet with, is represented as done by the dragon, that is, by the malice of the devil, and his agents on earth. The meaning of Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, is nothing more nor less than the contests which the primitive Chris-

tians had with the Heathen power of the Roman empire, which worshipped the devil; and Satan and his angels being cast out, means the establishment of Christianity in the empire, by the overthrow of Heathenism; for *heaven*, in prophetic language, means dominion and authority. Indeed this interpretation is confirmed by the verses next to that in which Satan is said to be cast out: *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night: And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.* The last words evidently point at the sufferings of the *Christians* under the Heathen government of Rome; and *they* are said to have overcome the dragon *. The passage in the 20th chapter plainly relates to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth; when he shall put down all **RULE AND ALL AUTHORITY.**

This great event is not to take place until immediately after the destruction of Antichrist; therefore the story of shutting Satan into a pit, and letting him out again, is the offspring of Mr. Paine's lively imagination.

Mr. Paine attempts to be witty in mentioning the transgression of Eve, and the Christian doctrine of redemption through Christ Jesus. The story of

* See Joseph Mede's *Clavis Apocalyptica*.

Satan being let out of the pit, is more than once repeated with a sort of triumph.

But levity is not reasoning. If we consider the situation in which Adam and Eve are said to have been placed, the test of obedience is apposite thereto. As they were alone on the earth, they could not transgress any *social duty*. No test of obedience could be proposed to them except a *positive precept*; and the prohibition of eating the fruit of a particular tree is not liable to any solid objection. I believe no man will question the propriety of God's requiring an obedience from his creatures; nor can it be said that man can be justly rewarded or punished, unless he be endued with the power of obeying or disobeying. After temptation and disobedience, the state of man seemed totally desperate: He could not make any effort to free himself from the penalty; for *future obedience*, could he have invariably paid it, could not do away his *former transgression*. There seemed to be no alternative in place of the execution of the sentence denounced to him; but God, in that tender mercy which true religion describes as presiding over all his works, devises a mode of salvation from the power of death. His Son, in the fulness of time, takes our nature upon him, and expiates the sin of the world.

There is nothing in all this to excite ribaldry and profaneness; nothing but what has a tendency to produce gratitude and submission to an all-gracious God, *whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, and whose ways are not as our ways.*

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We have already seen that there is abundance of evidence for this faith ; and to make it the object of ridicule is to exalt ourselves above God, and to prescribe to him how he shall deal with his transgressing creatures.

It may with propriety be remarked here, that the scriptural account of Adam's transgression, which was the unhappy consequence of his free agency, solves a difficulty, which the Heathen philosophers found it impossible to account for—the origin of evil : But we know from Revelation that it arose from *man*, corrupted in his nature by disobedience, the fatal consequence of his free agency.

Mr. Paine next passes on to what he calls “ an examination of the books called the Old and the New Testament.”

He says, “ When the church mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased.” This kind of general assertion never can conduce to the investigation of truth, and is therefore unworthy a reply. Mr. Paine ought to have been more explicit, and told us who were the church mythologists, at what period they collected the writings, and in what manner they managed them as they pleased. But that this gentleman wrote at random, appears from the following extract : “ Who the people were that did all this, *we know nothing of* ; they called themselves by the general name of the Church, and this is all we know of the matter.”

One thing is very plain, that Mr. Paine knows nothing of the matter on which he writes so dogmatically. In a treatise, which professes to be argumentative, he explicitly avows his own ignorance of the subject, and undertakes to affirm the same of all other men.

In the beginning of his pamphlet he gave us his definition of *Revelation*, which he said, when applied to religion, meant something communicated *immediately* from God to man; but in the part of his book now under consideration, he “proceeds further with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question;” that is, to the books of Scripture. For *this purpose* he defines “Revelation to be a communication of something, which the person, to whom that thing is revealed, did not know before;” and from this he infers, “that revelation *therefore* cannot be applied to any thing done upon earth, of which man is himself the actor or the witness.” Observe here the justness of the definition, and of the inference! According to this statement, every event which occurs, and comes to the knowledge of any person, is revelation; every book a man reads is a revelation, if it communicates something he “did not know before.”

The first use of the mariner's compass was revelation; the use of gunpowder was revelation; the art of printing was revelation; in short, every thing was and is revelation; and yet, strange to tell! “revelation cannot be applied to any thing done upon earth, of which man is himself the actor or the
“witness;”

“ witness ;” and the *final* consequence drawn from this bundle of contradictions is, that “ *consequently* all the *historical* and *anecdotal* part of the Bible, which is *almost* the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word Revelation, and therefore is not the word of God.” It is truly astonishing that a man who values himself so much upon his literary attainments, as it appears Mr. Paine does, from his constant egotism, should so miserably expose himself, by sending such vile trash into the world, which carries its own confutation with it : But the triumph is not worth pursuing further.

From metaphysical altitudes, Mr. Paine descends to detail, and succeeds equally. He *asserts*, that “ the account of the creation, with which the Book of Genesis opens, has all the appearance of being a tradition, which the Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt ;” and he *proves* his position by saying, “ that the manner in which the account opens shows it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that hears. It is addressed to nobody. It has neither first, second, nor third person *. It has every *criterion* of being a tradition. It has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself, by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, *The Lord spake unto Moses, saying.*”

* This is the first time I have heard of any species of writing which has neither *first*, *second*, nor *third* person. The discovery is a fresh proof of our author's sagacity.

I am truly disgusted with such puerility. The history of the creation is written in the third person, as almost every history is; and the objections here urged against Moses being the writer, will go to almost every history being written by the person whose name it bears. For instance, Cæsar begins his history of the Gallic war with these words in the *third person*: *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres* *. “ *It begins abruptly. It is nobody that speaks. It is nobody that bears. It is addressed to nobody,*” any more than the history of the creation, which begins with these words: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*; and yet it has never been contested, that on this account the Commentaries were not really written by Cæsar.

But Mr. Paine’s discoveries are wonderful. “ He is at a loss to conceive why it has been called the Mosaic account of the creation. He believes that Moses was too good a judge of such subjects, to put his name to that account.” But before Mr. Paine makes any profelytes to his belief, he must adduce better reasons for it than his mere *ipse dixit*.

For my part I am fully persuaded that Longinus is much better authority, that he was a better scholar, and was better acquainted with the sentiments of antiquity on this subject than Mr. Paine; and he, in his admirable treatise on the Sublime, makes mention of Moses as the author of the History of the Cre-

* All Gaul is divided into three parts.

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* All Gaul is divided into three parts,

ation, which he quotes as an example of sublime composition.

Mr. Paine prates about the learning* of the Egyptians. Let him read the 15th Satire of Juvenal, who lived among them, and he will have a full view of this enlightened state.

But we have a novel piece of information concerning Moses. Mr. Paine roundly asserts, that "he was not an Israelite." Moses tells us that he was the son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi, the son of Israel. Are we to suppose that Mr. Paine is better informed on the subject?

With his usual accuracy, Mr. Paine argues against the Bible being the word of God, because the historic part of it gives a faithful detail of the vices of many men, of whom we have account; but this impartiality in the sacred historians, is an argument for the authenticity of their writings. Although the Jews are said to have been the chosen people of God, there were many of them vicious monsters. But did their law authorise the practice of any wickedness? It certainly did not; and the vicious practice of the Jews is not to be imputed to their laws, any more than the wickedness we see every day committed before our eyes, is to be ascribed to Christianity; or than the commission of highway robbery is to be attributed to the Act of Parliament which makes it a capital crime.

* As Mr. Paine says he does not understand Greek or Latin, he may consult Smith's translation of Longinus, and Dryden's translation of Juvenal.

Mr. Paine is pleased to acknowledge, that “ in
 “ the Psalms and Book of Job we find a great deal
 “ of elevated sentiment, reverentially expressed, of
 “ the power and benignity of the Almighty; but
 “ they stand on no higher rank than many other
 “ compositions, on similar subjects, as well before
 “ that time as since.” For this last position we
 have, as usual, Mr. Paine’s assertion, but not the
 shadow of proof: Not a single instance is given;
 and the reason is obvious—because none exists.

He allows that the Proverbs are an instructive
 “ table of ethics; but they are inferior in keenness
 “ to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more
 “ wise and œconomical than those of the American
 “ Franklin.” Is it not the grossest stupidity to in-
 stitute this comparison? Who knows any thing of a
 publication of Spanish proverbs? Was not Franklin
 a sincere Christian, and well acquainted with the
 scriptural writings? But let any man read the 8th
 chapter of the Proverbs, and then point out the mo-
 dern writer who has produced any similar passage,
 that will bear a comparison with it.

The prophetic writings of the Bible are the next
 object of Mr. Paine’s feeble, malevolent attack. He
 says they are the work of the Jewish poets and itine-
 rant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and de-
 votion together.

But of what moment is it whether they were or
 were not itinerant preachers or poets, if they were
 prophets, in the acceptation in which the word is al-
 ways taken at present, if they were endued with the

power of foretelling future events? Mr. Paine has not attempted to prove that they were itinerant preachers; nor is it of use in deciding the present question, whether they were or were not. But his method of proving they were poets, is really curious.

In a note he says, “ To show that these writings
“ are composed in poetical numbers, I will take *ten*
“ syllables as they stand in the book, and *make* a line
“ of the same number of syllables (heroic measure),
“ that shall *rhyme* with the last word; it will *then* be
“ seen that the composition of these books is poeti-
“ cal measure.”

To prove that certain writings in the *Hebrew* language are poetical, Mr. Paine takes ten syllables from the *prosaic English translation*, and he makes a *rhyme* for the last word. O rare and accurate scholar! The philological and critical Colossus, Dr. Johnson, was but a pigmy compared to thee!

The first instance produced is from Isaiah, chap. i. ver. 2. which runs thus in the translation: Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. Mr. Paine, for his purpose, writes it thus:

Hear, O *ye* heavens, and give ear, O earth. He adds the word *ye* for his convenience. The next instance is from Jeremiah, chap. ix. ver. 1. The entire verse runs thus: *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!* Of this elegant, pathetic exclamation, Mr. Paine takes the first ten syllables, and of the remainder of
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the verse he makes a bombastic paraphrase, in rhyme, in which he talks of eyes, *flowing like the liquid skies*, and of giving *mighty floods release, and weeping deluges for the human race*.

Is it not plain, that, by Mr. Paine's criterion of poetry, every book may be proved to be poetical? Is there a book in the English language, whether a translation from any other, or originally written therein, from which ten syllables (more or less) could not somewhere be taken, and a rhyme made for the last word *? I must observe here, that I do not mean to deny that several parts of the Old Testament are poetical: I know that the late learned Bishop Lowth has written a treatise on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews; my object is only to expose the presumptuous ignorance of a man, who writes so dogmatically on a subject he does not understand.

The inference Mr. Paine draws from all this *display of learning*, is, that the word *Prophet* in the Bible means *Poet*, and that prophesying means the art of making poetry. He insists that "the word *Prophet*, "to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was "the Bible word for poet, and the word *Prophecy*—

* By Mr. Paine's argument, I will prove his Age of Reason to be poetical: I will take *eight* syllables of his, and find a rhyme for the last. The words I chuse are the following: "*Though I went to the Grammar-school I did not learn Latin:*"

Though I went to the Grammar-school,
I nothing did but play the fool;
I could not get a lesson pat in
The crabbed language that's called Latin.

"ing"

"*ing* meant the art of making poetry." To decide this question, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the ancient languages. I do not understand Hebrew, but I have inquired of those who do, and have been informed, that the word which we translate *to prophesy* means *to foretel*. I have some knowledge of Greek and Latin, and know that in both these languages the words which we translate *Poet* and *Prophet* have the distinct meanings, which we annex to them: The truth is, that they are both of Greek extraction; the *seventy* translators* have never confounded them one with another, and it must be confessed that they are better authority than that man who commences philologist without knowing *any* of the learned languages.

If Mr. Paine had considered a little closer, he would have found that the word *Song* or *Psalms* in the Bible translation means Poem, and Singer or Psalmist means Poet.

The next cavil is at the *modern* distinction of greater and lesser Prophets: He says, "they might as well tell us of the greater and lesser God;" but does not every man know that the Prophets are called *greater* or *lesser*, in relation to the bulk of their respective writings? Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, are called the greater Prophets, because their respective books contain *more pages* than any of the other Prophets, who are called the lesser.

* Vide Septuaginta Græci passim.

The conclusion which Mr. Paine draws from his unfounded premises, is, that “ It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men styled Prophets have written.— The ax goes at once to the root, by showing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken:” Whereas Mr. Paine has done nothing more than expose his own ignorance in idly attempting to exhibit the scanty pittance of learning he possesses. He triumphantly exclaims, “ Thus much for the Bible : I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The *New* Testament? that is the *new* will, as if there could be two wills of the Creator.” A fresh proof this of Mr. Paine’s flippant ignorance. Sure I am, that the schoolboy, who could not tell that the word which is translated *Testament*, means *Covenant*, would not be qualified for admittance into any of the Universities, but ought to be kept some time longer under the discipline of the birch.

The next *assertion* is, that “ Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or have *procured it to be written* in his life-time.”

But what difference does it make whether Jesus Christ wrote the system of his religion, or that men *properly qualified* wrote it? The question is not here, whether this religion be true or not; let it be true or false, it is of no moment whether Christ or his Apostles wrote the account of his life and doctrine. If Christianity be an imposture, it signifies not who were guilty
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of the forgery ; if it be founded in eternal truth, the Apostles, who were instructed by the Spirit of God, were fully able to declare to man, and to write all things necessary for salvation, which the Evangelists have done in their histories of the life of Christ, although Mr. Paine is pleased, in his usual style of assertion, to call their books " detached anecdotes."

After expatiating at some length on the circumstances of the life of Christ, our author mentions the Acts of the Apostles as an anonymous work, whereas the introduction of it shows that it was written by St. Luke ; and then despatches, in a concise manner, the remainder of the New Testament, by calling the Revelations a " book of enigmas," and the Epistles " a collection of letters ;" and says, the probability is at least equal, whether they are genuine or forged. So then it at last appears, from this gentleman's own words, after all the abuse Revelation has received from his pen, that the probability is equal, whether a part of Revelation be genuine or forged, for no man at all acquainted with the *Scriptures*, will deny that the Epistles in every thing agree with the other parts of them, or that they have not always been quoted from the earliest days of Christianity by all ecclesiastical writers. It is not true, that the Apocalypse is a book of enigmas ; it is now well understood, and without it the *Scriptures* would be incomplete. As the Mosaic account informs us man was created in the image of God, this book tells us, that finally mankind will once more pay a perfect obedience to the Creator : This wonderful revolution is not to take

place until after the overthrow of the Turkish empire, and the destruction of Antichrist, when the kingdoms of this world shall literally *become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Who, that considers for a moment, can avoid seeing the completion of the prophecies of St. John this moment? Have we not seen the vial of God's wrath poured out on France, a part of the seat of the beast? Do not the following words clearly point out that we are in that very period? "And the fifth angel poured out his vial on the seat of the beast, and his *kingdom* was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of Heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." Rev. xvi. 10, 11.—Is there not every appearance of similar events taking place, without delay, in every Popish country in Europe; and thus the prophecy being completely and entirely fulfilled?

We have now followed Mr. Paine's strictures on the books of the Old and New Testament; and have exposed his ignorance of the writings he attacks, and the fallacy of his arguments. It is not a difficult task for any man to sit down and write at random, to give the world a concise collection of assertions on the subject of Revelation; but, thanks to God, although his word may be attacked, it cannot be overthrown. There is no ancient book which carries with it such incontestable marks of authenticity as are perceptible in the sacred writings; none, from which so large extracts have been made by number-

less writers, since the first century: To deny its genuineness is at once to decry all ancient authors, and to refuse assent to any historic document of former times. Scepticism has not yet advanced to this absurd length openly; but, in fact, when unbelievers argue against the sacred writings, they, at the same time, call in question the truth of all ancient history.

It is not my intention to follow Mr. Paine through the remainder of his book, which is principally filled with an account of *his education*, and with a short system of astronomy. I shall take brief notice of three or four passages that follow, and then have done with him.

The revelation which Mr. Paine admits to be made to man he expresses in the following words: "The word of God is the creation we behold; and "it is in *this word*, which no human invention can "counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally "to man." To the reflecting mind, the creation exhibits astonishing proofs of the power, wisdom, and beneficence of God; but it does not, by any means, convey to the mass of mankind any one idea with regard to religious knowledge; if it did, the South Sea islander, the American Indian, or the Hottentot, would be as enlightened on this subject as the most learned European. All nations would possess the same portion of divine knowledge, and the worship of the Deity would be equally pure among all people; for all nations are naturally endued with equal powers of perception, and a man has merely to look round
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him to discover the wonders of the creation; and (according to Mr. Paine) to have a knowledge of the word of God.

We have only to consult the accounts of voyagers and travellers to be convinced that this *word of God*, appointed by Mr. Paine, is a very insufficient guide in religious concerns, and far inferior to Christianity; the great doctrines and precepts of which cannot be mistaken even by the most inattentive.

To exalt *his word of God* above the Scriptures, Mr. Paine “recollects not a single passage in all the “writings ascribed to the men called Apostles, that “conveys any idea of what God is.” I will quote one passage expressed with a sublimity that has never been exceeded:—GOD, THAT MADE THE WORLD AND ALL THINGS THEREIN, SEEING THAT HE IS LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, DWELLETH NOT IN TEMPLES MADE WITH HANDS; NEITHER IS WORSHIPPED WITH MEN’S HANDS, AS THOUGH HE NEEDED ANY THING, SEEING HE GIVETH TO ALL LIFE AND BREATH, AND ALL THINGS; AND HATH MADE OF ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS OF THE EARTH FOR TO DWELL ON ALL THE FACE OF THE EARTH, AND HATH DETERMINED THE TIMES BEFORE APPOINTED, AND THE BOUNDS OF THEIR HABITATIONS; THAT THEY SHOULD SEEK THE LORD, IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FEEL AFTER HIM, AND FIND HIM, THOUGH HE BE NOT FAR FROM EVERY ONE OF US: FOR IN HIM WE LIVE, MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING. Acts, xvii. 24.—There is no book extant, in which the Almighty is

spoken of in such dignified terms (the Bible excepted) as in the quotation above cited; many similar passages from the New Testament might be referred to, but it is not at all necessary so to do, as Mr. Paine's recollection appears to have been blunted when he wrote the objection last copied from him.

This learned gentleman, who affects universal knowledge, who is metaphysician, historian, critic, philologist, astronomer, mechanic, poet, and linguist, favours us with a dissertation on the Greeks, and the Greek language; and asserts that "learning Greek is now become an useless drudgery, and that the genius of a child is killed by the barren study of a dead language."

With as much propriety might a man, born blind, descant on the comparative merits of the paintings of Vandyke and Sir Joshua Reynolds, as Mr. Paine attempt to ascertain the utility of a language, with which he confesses himself entirely unacquainted. This is a species of arrogance that is not easily arrived at, and must be the joint produce of ignorance and dogmatism; the close union of which qualities is frequently perceptible in the same person.

I have now taken a review of the opinions of Mr. Paine on the subject of Revelation, and have pointed out his mis-statements, his inaccuracy, and, what is worse, his ignorance of the book he writes against. The result is, that as Christianity has withstood the assaults of unbelievers, from its propagation
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tion to the present hour, Mr. Paine's demi-culverin has not been able to make an impression on any of the out-works; and the fortress of the Christian Faith is still impregnable, and so will continue, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

POSTSCRIPT.

A FRIEND has suggested the following remark, which certainly has great force as an argument *ad hominem*.

Amidst the abuse which Mr. Paine has vented against Christianity, he asserts that nothing he *has said* can apply with disrespect to the real character of Jesus Christ; that he was a virtuous man, &c. Now it is plain, that if Jesus Christ was not the real character he said he was, it is hard to conceive one more depraved; for to pretend to be divinely commissioned when not sent by the Almighty, is the most daring of all impieties. Jesus Christ avowed himself to be God, and if he was not, he was an impostor (I shudder while I write the words); but, blessed be God, there is abundance of evidence to prove that he was, and is, the *Power of God*, and the *Wisdom of God*.

If Jesus Christ was the virtuous character Mr. Paine allows he was, all the declamation Mr. Paine has used against Revelation is truly *Vox and preterea nil*.

Mr. Paine has the option to hang his argument on either horn of the dilemma.

THE END.

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